

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 01009 021035Z
ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
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INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PBOR, MOPS, ET, SO, CU
SUBJECT: MENGISTU ACKNOWLEDGES CUBAN MILITARY ROLE

SUMMARY: PMAC CHAIRMAN MENGISTU HAILE-MARIAM'S SPEECH MARCH 2 AT
LARGE RALLY COMMEMORATING ETHIOPIAN MILITARY VICTORY OVER
ITALIANS AT ADOWA WAS NOTEWORTHY ONLY FOR HIS FRANK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
FOR FIRST TIME THAT CUBAN SOLDIERS FIGHTING SIDE BY SIDE
WITH ETHIOPIANS ON FRONT LINE IN OGADEN. OTHERWISE, SPEECH WAS
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PAGE 02 ADDIS 01009 021035Z

SHORT AND STRAIGHTFORWARD, COMPARING ITALIAN INVASION IN 1896
WITH CURRENT SOMALI AGGRESSION SUPPORTED BY INTERNATIONAL
IMPERIALISM AND PREDICTING VICTORY SIMILAR TO ADOWA IN NEAR
FUTURE. HE MADE ONLY ONE MENTION OF US DIRECTLY, AND MENGISTU'S
REMARKS GENERALLY WERE FAR MORE RESTRAINED THAN IN ANY OF HIS
PUBLIC STATEMENTS SINCE LAST SEPTEMBER. AT SAME TIME HE GAVE NO
INDICATION OF WILLINGNESS TO SEEK NEGOTIATED PEACE, OTHER THAN

TO CALL AGAIN FOR IMMEDIATE AND UNCONDITIONAL SOMALI WITHDRAWAL.
END SUMMARY.

1. IN SHORT, RATHER PEDESTRIAN SPEECH AT COLORFUL ADOWA DAY RALLY MARCH 2, MENGISTU AGAIN DREW PARALLELS BETWEEN PAST AND PRESENT ETHIOPIAN HISTORY. HE CLAIMED THAT "ANTI-PEOPLE AND ANTI-PEACE CONSPIRACY NOW BEING WOVEN IN WASHINGTON, PARIS, LONDON, BONN, ROME, AND REACTIONARY ARAB CAPITALS" WAS AN EXTENSION OF SIMLAR 19TH CENTURY CONSPIRACY OF THEN IMPERIALIST POWERS TO CARVE UP AFRICA. AFTER DISCUSSING ITALY'S ROLE AND ETHIOPIAN VICTORY AT ADOWA, HE SAID THIS TIME ETHIOPIA IS STRUGGLING NOT ONLY AGAINST SINGLE FOE, BUT AGAINST MORE THAN 13 (UNNAMED) COUNTRIES DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY EXPANDING WAR OF INVATION, AND AGAINST NUMEROUS INTERNAL REACTIONARIES ATTEMPTING TO UNDERMINE ETHIOPIAN UNITY AND TO SUBVERT HER REVOLUTION.

2. BUT REVOLUTIONARY ETHIOPIA AND HER PEOPLE'S ARMY ARE NOT ALONE, MENGISTU SAID. SOVIET UNION, OTHER SOCIALIST COUNTRIES, PROGRESSIVE FORCES, AND PEACE-LOVING AFRICANS THAT OPPOSE EXPLOITATION WERE OFFERING POLITICAL, MORAL, AND MATERIAL SUPPORT. MENGISTU'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT CUBANS, "RENOWNED FOR SHEDDING THEIR BLOOD ANYWHERE FOR JUST STRUGGLE AND CAUSE, HAVE PLACED THEMSELVES ALONGSIDE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE'S ARMY ON THE FRONT LINE" DREW PROLONGED APPLAUSE FROM CROWD.

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PAGE 03 ADDIS 01009 021035Z

3. REMAINDER OF SPEECH WAS PRO-FORMA. MENGISTU SAID MILITARY STRUGGLE WOULD CONTINUE UNTIL INVADING TROOPS OF SOMALIA AND THEIR SUPPORTERS WITHDRAW IMMEDIATELY AND UNCONDITIONALLY FROM ETHIOPIAN TERRITORY. HE MADE PASSING REFERENCES TO REACTIONARY ARAB SUPPORT FOR ERITREAN SECESSIONIST MOVEMENT, AND TO FACT THAT EDU AND EPRP TERRORIST CAMPAIGN AGAINST GENUINE PROGRESSIVES HAD BEEN HIT HARD AND WAS BEING BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL. MENGISTU CITED EXAMPLES OF VIET NAM, ANGOLA, CUBA, ALGERIA, AND PDRY TO SHOW THAT IMPERIALIST EFFORTS TO PROLONG EXPLOITATION OF OPPRESSED PEOPLES WERE DOOMED TO FAILURE. HE CONCLUDED BY CLAIMING THAT ETHIOPIA NOT SEEKING TO SNATCH AWAY TERRITORY OF OTHERS OR TO SPILL BLODD OF OTHERS POINTLESSLY. BUT TIME WAS FAST APPROACHING WHEN BROAD MASSES WOULD REENACT ADOWA BY DEALING CRUSHING BLOW AGAINST INTERNAL SUBVERSIVES, REACTIONARY SOMALIA, AND ARAB MERCENARIES AND IMPERIALIST HIRELINGS.

4. COMMENT: SPEECH WAS SHORT ON DETAIL, DID NOT DWELL ON INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES WHICH ETHIOPIA CONSIDERS HOSTILE, DID NOT DESCRIBE BATTLE SITUATION, AND GAVE NO HINT THAT OGADEN WAR MIGHT END BY OTHER THAN MILITARY MEANS. POLEMICS OF KIND EMBASSY HAS BECOME USED TO WERE NOTABLY ABSENT. ONE SWALLOW DOES NOT

MAKE A SPRING, BUT JUDGING ON TODAY'S PERFORMANCE, SOME OF
MESSAGE OF AARON MISSION MAY HAVE HIT HOME, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY.
MATHERON

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